

which voluntarily accepted them in advance. When MacDonald announced the decision to sign the Optional Clause in the Assembly of 1929, other states, large and small, came trooping in. In our own case the burden of obligation was diminished by the reservation of domestic and inter-Imperial questions. Moreover, signatories of the Optional Clause pledged themselves only to the submission of legal or treaty disputes. Since many of the most inflammable problems are not matters of legal interpretation, the British Government also acceded in 1931 to the General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, providing machinery for conciliation in cases not of a juridical character, approved by the League Assembly in 1928. Briand's scheme for a European federation, outlined at the Assembly of 1929, provoked a good deal of discussion but was tacitly dropped; for the states and peoples had too little confidence in one another to co-operate systematically in great affairs.

X. THE END OF RECOVERY

The history of post-war Europe falls into three chapters. The first, extending from 1918 to the defeat of the *Einkauf* in 1924, was a period of confusion and anxiety. The second, also covering six years, beginning with the withdrawal from the Ruhr and the framing of the Dawes Report, was a time of convalescence. The three Foreign Ministers—Austen Chamberlain, Briand and Stresemann—liked and trusted one another, convinced as they were that friendly relations between their nations were essential to the recovery of Europe; and Arthur Henderson carried on the tradition of intimate co-operation. Further welcome signs of a *detente* were apparent when the Dawes Plan was superseded by the Young Plan in 1929, slightly reducing the annual burden of

reparations and
creating a Bank of International Settlement at
Basel. The
armies of occupation, it was agreed, were to
evacuate the
Rhineland by the summer of 1930. The territory
had been
divided into three zones, which, subject to the
fulfilment of
her obligations by Germany, were to be
successively evacuated
at intervals of five years, dating from the coming
into operation
of the treaty in January, 1920. The
Cologne^zone was
handed back in 1926, one year after the
scheduled time. The
Coblenz zone was due for evacuation in June,
1930, but when
the date arrived the Mainz zone was also
returned. When
Hitler declares that Germany was trampled
underfoot till he